

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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DNR URGES PRODUCERS NOT TO PANIC OVER NEW FEDERAL ANIMAL FEEDING RULES

DES MOINES — The DNR urges animal producers not to worry about the state making quick or drastic changes in animal feeding operations rules because of changes in federal regulations due to be released on Dec. 16.

The federal rules have been years in the making, part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response to concern about pollution from animal feeding operations (AFO) and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO).

"Don't panic and don't expect any immediate changes in Iowa rules or legislation as a result of federal changes," said Robin Pruisner, the DNR coordinator for animal feeding.

A group of producers, environmental and commodity groups, DNR and Extension will work together to study the rules and determine how they mesh with existing Iowa laws.

It will probably take more than a year to analyze how the AFO/CAFO rules specifically apply to our state. Then it will take substantial time to implement any changes required by federal regulations. That means producers will have time to understand and comply with the new regulations, she added.

The DNR expects to receive a website address or an electronic copy of the EPA's regulations on Dec. 16, but some editorial changes could occur before the official version is published in the Federal Register in mid-January.

“Producers should expect to hear much more about how these regulations will affect Iowans during the next two years, but for now they need to follow existing rules and regulations,” Praisner said.

Updates on the federal rules will be posted on the DNR website at <http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/epd/wastewtr/feedlot/feedlt.htm> as the information becomes available.

For more information, contact Robin Praisner at (515) 281-8690.

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COUNCIL BLUFFS WORKERS MINIMIZE IMPACT TO MISSOURI RIVER

COUNCIL BLUFFS — Thorough advanced planning helped reduce the amount of sewage that had to be released to the Missouri River during recent repair work done on the sewer system in Council Bluffs.

“The city of Council Bluffs and its contractor did a yeoman’s job of minimizing the environmental impact during necessary repair work,” said Dan Stipe, supervisor of the DNR’s field office in Atlantic.

The city was forced to bypass raw sewage into the Missouri River to replace a pump that had failed in the Second Street area. The work, which was completed Oct. 28, Oct. 31 and Nov. 15, was originally anticipated to bypass approximately 244,000 gallons of untreated sewage during the repair project. Through advanced planning, the city was able to cut that amount by nearly one-third.

Work was planned in stages and temporary piping was constructed and installed to allow one pump to continue to operate while the other two pumps were out of service, said Kirk Mathis, a DNR environmental specialist.

“The city and contractor worked to make sure that all materials were on hand ready for installation before taking the pump station out of service,” Mathis said. “This helped minimize down time and ensure that the remaining pump could be reconnected as soon as possible.”

Although bypassing untreated sewage is not a desirable situation, Stipe said the public needs to recognize that it is sometimes unavoidable.

“Mechanical equipment breaks down over time and requires repair,” Stipe said. “While we don’t like to see bypassing, it is sometimes a necessary evil if the alternative is to have sewage back up into homes and businesses, which would be much more of a health threat.”

Stipe said the recently completed work by the city of Council Bluffs was a textbook example of how environmental impacts can be minimized when facing an unavoidable bypassing situation.

“The city and its contractor looked at the various alternatives available to them and made sure that everything was ready before they began the work,” Stipe said. “The result was a lot less sewage getting into the river than what could have been. I would hope that other cities can act as responsibly as Council Bluffs when they are facing similar repair work.”

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PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT FOR WATER QUALITY AT LOWER PINE LAKE

DES MOINES — Plans for improving water quality at Lower Pine Lake in Hardin County are open for public comment through Dec 13.

A draft TMDL — or Total Maximum Daily Load — has been developed for Lower Pine Lake. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated use such as maintaining aquatic life, allowing body contact such as swimming or being used as a drinking water supply.

TMDLs also include plans on how water quality can be improved through conservation efforts in the respective watersheds. After receiving public comment, the TMDLs will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

Lower Pine Lake is impaired from organic enrichment that causes low dissolved oxygen hampering fish life. In Lower Pine Lake the dissolved oxygen impairment is the result of algal decay oxygen demand. Nuisance algal blooms are the consequence of excess nutrients, usually phosphorous, which is often carried into the lake attached to sediment during runoff. These conditions promote heavy algal blooms through the summer and fall leading to the predominance of blue-green algae, limited clarity, floating algal scum, and the prevalence of rough fish.

The lake’s designated uses are for primary body contact such as swimming and maintaining aquatic life for fishing. A project resulting in extensive watershed improvements being made through the cooperation of private landowners was completed in the 1990s, along with renovation of both Upper and Lower Pine Lakes including dredging.

Recommendations made by the DNR for improving water quality at Lower Pine Lake include:

- Install check dams on smaller tributaries to reduce peak flows during runoff events.
- Install stream bank protection using vegetation and graded rock.
- Stabilize stream banks by shaping and removing overhangs.

The TMDL also recommends continued efforts to reduce soil erosion from row crop fields in the watershed with particular emphasis on fields close to the lake and feeder streams having steeper slopes without effective management practices in place.

Suggested controls include:

- Management practices that will increase crop residue such as no-till farming,
- Construct terraces and grassed waterways.
- Install buffer strips along stream corridors.
- Construct grade stabilization structures to reduce head cutting and gully expansion.
- Removal of bottom feeding fish.

The draft TMDLs can be obtained and comments can be made using the following sources:

- Internet — [Http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/epd/wtresrce/303dnotc.htm](http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/epd/wtresrce/303dnotc.htm)
- E-mail — william.graham@dnr.state.ia.us
- Telephone by calling William Graham at (515) 281-5917
- Mail by writing: William Graham, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

For more information, contact William Graham at (515) 281-5917 or Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.

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ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT FINISHED FOR 2001

DES MOINES — For the sixth consecutive year (since 1996), the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has prepared a state annual compliance report on public drinking water supplies (PWSs). From this report, four major conclusions were determined:

- No waterborne disease outbreaks or deaths were reported as being attributed to drinking water from regulated PWSs.
- More than 91 percent of all PWSs were found to be in compliance with health-based drinking water standards.
- Out of the 83 regulated chemicals and compounds, 12 were found to be in higher than recommended levels, as compared to eight in 2000.
- More than 82 percent of the PWSs completed all of their major monitoring and reporting requirements because they collected the required samples.

The data from the report indicates that there has been some improvement in drinking water quality over the last six years. The number of PWSs that were not in compliance with health standards decreased from 198 in 1998 to 168 in 2001. This can primarily be attributed to fewer occurrences of coliform bacteria and nitrate contamination. By June 2002, 50 percent of the 168 drinking water quality violations had been corrected.

The number of PWSs having major monitoring violations decreased from 499 in 1998 to 354 in 2001. By June 2002, 90 percent of the 354 major monitoring violations had been corrected.

The contaminants that were found to exceed safe standards were: arsenic, coliform, fecal coliform, total coliform, copper, fluoride, gross alpha (excluding radon & uranium), lead, nitrate, nitrite, radium, combined radium 226+228, total trihalomethanes, and turbidity.

The “Public Drinking Water Program 2001 Annual Compliance Report” has been distributed to Iowa’s Environmental Protection Commission, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Governor’s Office, Iowa legislature, and each public water supply listed in the report.

Copies are available on the DNR’s web site at:

<http://www.state.ia.us/epd/wtrsupply/report/report.htm> or by contacting: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Water Supply Section, 401 SW 7th St., Suite M, Des Moines, IA, 50309-4611, phone number 515-725-0282.

For more information, contact Dennis Alt at (515) 725-0275.

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DNR TO EXHIBIT AT IOWA CATTLEMEN S ASSOCIATION SHOW

DES MOINES – The DNR will highlight successful environmental practices used on open feedlots at the Iowa Cattlemen’s Association’s annual convention Dec. 11 to 13 in Des Moines.

“There are many ways to tackle environmental problems, so we will show a variety of structures that work and that will meet current environmental regulations,” said Robin Pruisner, coordinator of DNR animal feeding.

DNR representatives will be available to answer producers’ questions about compliance or regulatory requirements.

The tradeshow is open from 5 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 11 and from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 12.

For more information, contact Robin Pruisner at (515) 281-8690.

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DNR ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

DES MOINES — The DNR has taken the following enforcement actions. Responsible parties have 30 days to appeal the charges or 60 days to pay the penalty.

- Carroll County Board of Supervisors was ordered to enforce standards eliminating prohibited discharges from private sewage disposal systems at Mount Carmel and Maple River.
- Carl Simon of Farley was ordered to pay a \$5,000 penalty, install a structure to divert clean water away from manure storage basin, maintain two-feet of freeboard in basin at all times and submit a plan describing how leachate and milking power spills will be managed to avoid discharges into waters of the state.
- Trafton Enterprises, Inc., and Interstate Lounge, Inc. of Underwood was ordered to pay a \$6,800 penalty and \$2,340 in delinquent tank management fees, to permanently close three underground storage tanks, to conduct required soil and groundwater investigations and to file required tank closure report.
- Jeff Reed of Lenox was ordered to pay a \$7,250 penalty, to temporary close an underground storage tank system until the DNR certifies that required standards are being met, repair diesel tank or permanently close it within 12 months after taking it out of service and to hire a certified groundwater professional to conduct assessment of groundwater and soil contamination.
- Richard Ogden of Manchester was ordered to pay a \$2,500 penalty and to cease performing well services until properly certified.

For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.